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### Facts, Not Feelings

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“The world is gonna end in 12 years if we don't address climate change and your biggest issue is how are we gonna pay for it?<sup>1</sup>” This is a direct quote from Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, a sitting U.S. congresswoman. In the next few sentences, she also proceeds to say that climate change is “our generations World War II”. 70 million people died in World War II, not only is it doing disrespect to those who gave the ultimate sacrifice, but it is physically impossible to compare war to climate change.

What she and others, such as Greta Thunberg and Al Gore, are doing is displaying very alarmist behavior and attempting to sow fear into the average person who may not be educated on the subject of weather and climate. Of the next generation of voters (16-17-year-old) who see these famous people plastered all over the social media, only 48.5%<sup>2</sup> can correctly understand the basic science behind climate change. I've worked in the climate field for the past year and a half, the world does not just end overnight. While yes, the climate is changing not necessarily in our favor, there is still a massive number of unknowns regarding what will happen as a result of it.

At the United Nations Climate Action Summit, Greta Thunberg gave this very alarming quote,” People are dying. Entire ecosystems are collapsing. We are at the beginning of mass extinction.” Each time a politician or activist says something more and more radical, people become more desensitized. Think along the lines of The Boy Who Cried Wolf. By saying worse and worse things are going to happen, it becomes a slippery slope which leads to people ignoring the problem. Why worry about agricultural methods raising the dewpoint temperatures

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<sup>1</sup> <https://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/426353-ocasio-cortez-the-world-will-end-in-12-years-if-we-dont-address>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3758816/>

(temperature when the air becomes saturated)  $2.6^{\circ}\text{C}^3$  when you are being told that you are going to die from something else? While making these statements, she does not offer any sources or statistics to back up a bold statement like that. She is attempting to use scare tactics to sway people in her favor, which in my view, only pushes people away.

Al Gore said in 2013, “The insistence on complete certainty about the full details of global warming-the most serious threat we have ever faced-is actually an effort to avoid facing the awful, uncomfortable truth: that we must act boldly, decisively, comprehensively, and quickly, even before we know every last detail about the crisis. Those who continue to argue that the appropriate response is merely additional research are simply seeking to camouflage timidity or protect their vested interest in the status quo.<sup>4</sup>” The people in the science field have their assumptions or feelings on certain subjects, but they speak in factual information<sup>5</sup>. John Christy, a respected atmospheric scientist, was ostracized by his peers<sup>6</sup> because he stated that we should be skeptical and question the models and data. He isn’t saying that because he is denying that the climate is changing, rather, even with the most advanced technology, we truly have no idea what is going to happen in the future. Coming from a writer of one of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reports, this has weight behind it. Instead, he has been cast aside and viscously attacked by his peers all because he isn’t blindly trusting everything he sees. Yet, when someone brings up cannibalism<sup>7</sup> to combat climate change, there are just crickets. Why are we

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<sup>3</sup> <https://journals.ametsoc.org/doi/full/10.1175/1520-0493%282003%29131%3C0556%3AIOIOMS%3E2.0.CO%3B2>

<sup>4</sup> Al Gore (2013). *Earth in the Balance: Forging a New Common Purpose*, p.40, Routledge

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.ametsoc.org/index.cfm/ams/policy/policy-memos/how-trustworthy-are-scientific-assessments-of-climate-change/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/07/16/us/skeptic-of-climate-change-john-christy-finds-himself-a-target-of-suspicion.html>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.breitbart.com/europe/2019/09/06/swedish-scientist-proposes-cannibalism-fight-climate-change/>

vilifying a man with a doctorate in atmospheric sciences and not the man suggesting we eat each other?

What do all of these different aspects have in common? In each case, feelings were brought out when facts should be used. We should be skeptical of the data and projections; we can't just put blind faith that it will be perfect. The major figureheads in the push for action on climate change all capitalize on the lack of knowledge of the common person. They all attempt to sway people through scare tactics or emotional outbursts. Whenever these people receive the slightest pushback asking about their sources or methods, they instantly label you a denier and slander you. Science is about asking questions and taking criticism. The moment you bring emotion or politics into science, you've lost focus on what it is about. In the end, science is based on facts and it should be left that way.